

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 LISBON 04216 251814Z

53

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

----- 071659

O 251703Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3536

S E C R E T LISBON 4216

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJECT: PRO-COMMUNIST POWER PLAY AND POSSIBLE APPROACH
TO COSTA GOMES

1. LIKE DEPARTMENT, I HAVE FOR PAST FEW DAYS BEEN WEIGHING
PROS AND CONS OF DIRECT APPROACH TO COSTA GOMES. THERE SEEMS
TO BE THREE ASPECTS TO BE CONSIDERED: (A) COST BENEFIT RATIO;
(B) MODALITIES OF DEMARCHE; (C) TIMING.

2. LISBON 4149 DISCUSSED COST BENEFIT RATIO. I SAID THAT IF
COSTA GOMES WAS ON OUR SIDE HE WOULD PROBABLY RESENT APPROACH
FROM ME, SINCE HIS EMISSARY, MAJOR CALDAS HAD SAID US VISIT
MIGHT LEAVE COSTA GOMES VULNERABLE TO CHARGES OF BEING A US
STOOGES. IF COSTA GOMES IS NOT ON OUR SIDE, HE MAY USE
DEMARCHE TO EMBARRASS MODERATES. THERE IS, HOWEVER, ANOTHER
ASPECT TO BE CONSIDERED. ALTHOUGH OUR LATEST INFORMATION
IS THAT COSTA GOMES IS LEANING TOWARDS VASCO GONCALVES,
HE IS CLEARLY AN INDECISIVE FIGURE, AND HE MAY NOT MAKE
UP HIS MIND UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE. RIGHT NOW HE MAY BE
ON NOBODY'S (OR EVERYBODY'S) SIDE. IF THIS IS THE CASE HIS
DECISION MAY BE BASED ON VARIOUS PRESSURES THAT ARE BEING
EXERTED, WITH HIS PRINCIPAL WORRY BEING HIS FUTURE SUPPORT.
IF THIS THESIS IS CORRECT, SOME PRESSURE FROM THE WEST COULD
WEIGH IN THE FINAL BALANCE IF WE ARE ABLE SUBTLY TO CONVINCE
HIM OUR SUPPORT COULD DISAPPEAR. WHILE I DID ATTEMPT TO EXERT
SUCH PRESSURE THROUGH FERREIRA DA CUNHA, THE RETURN SIGNALS
FROM COSTA GOMES HAVE GOTTEN PROGRESSIVELY WEAKER AS THE DAYS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 LISBON 04216 251814Z

SLIP BY. IT MAY BE THAT A FACE TO FACE DISCUSSION WOULD HAVE

MORE IMPACT, RECOGNIZING, ALBEIT, THAT RISKS ARE AT LEAST AS GREAT AS POTENTIAL BENEFITS. BUT MAYBE WE HAVE REACHED THE POINT WHERE RISKS ARE NECESSARY.

3. FOR THE US TO MAKE A DEMARCHE WHICH PRESUMABLY REFLECTS COLLECTIVE WESTERN INTERESTS GREATLY ENHANCES THE DANGERS OF A BACKFIRE, BOTH BECAUSE I AM HIGHLY VISIBLE AND BECAUSE IT AUTOMATICALLY PUTS THE WHOLE AFFAIR IN A COLD WAR CONTEXT IN THE MINDS OF THE PORTUGUESE. LOCAL NATO AMBASSADORS HAVE GENERALLY BEEN STRONGLY AGAINST COLLECTIVE DEMARCHES. IN THIS CASE I WOULD ALSO LEAN AGAINST A COLLECTIVE DEMARCHE SINCE THE COMMUNISTS WOULD CERTAINLY PLAY IT AS NATO INTERFERENCE. THE BEST THING IN MY JUDGMENT WOULD BE TO PERSUADE ONE OF OUR ALLIES, SUCH AS THE GERMANS, THE BRITISH, THE DUTCH, OR THE BELGIANS TO GO IN, INDICATING THEY HAVE CONSULTED WITH THE REST OF US. I SHOULD NOTE HOWEVER THAT ALL OF THE LOCAL AMBASSADORS ARE QUITE NEGATIVE ON THE IDEA OF APPROACHING COSTA GOMES. I DOUBT I COULD TURN ANY OF THEM AROUND HERE.

4. TIMING COULD BE CRITICAL. IF I WERE TO ASK FOR AN APPOINTMENT TODAY, MONDAY OR TUESDAY WOULD BE THE EARLIEST I WOULD RECEIVE ONE. BY THEN THERE WILL HAVE BEEN ANOTHER MEETING OF THE ARMED FORCES ASSEMBLY AND POSSIBLY THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL. THE SITUATION COULD HAVE CHANGED RADICALLY. I MUST ALSO STRESS AGAIN THAT I WANT TO RESPECT MELO ANTUNES'S ADVICE, PARTICULARLY SINCE HE IS THE STRONGEST FIGURE IN THE MODERATE CAMP. THIS COULD BE HANDLED, HOWEVER, BY CHECKING WITH MELO ANTUNES FIRST.

5. THERE IS ANOTHER THEORY GAINING CURRENCY AMONG THE MODERATES. THAT THEORY IS THAT VASCO GONCALVES SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO FORM A GOVERNMENT, BECAUSE WITHIN TWO MONTHS THE SITUATION WILL BE SO CATASTROPHIC THAT HE WILL HAVE TO RESIGN. THE PRESTIGE AND SUPPORT OF THE PCP AND THE AFM IS FALLING (I AGREE WITH THIS), AND AN ECONOMIC CRISIS WILL BE REACHED WHEN THE WORKERS RETURN FROM THEIR AUGUST VACATIONS. UNEMPLOYMENT WILL HAVE JUMPED ALARMINGLY AND SHORTAGES WILL HAVE STARTED. FOR THE MODERATES TO MAKE THEIR MOVE NOW AND INHERIT THIS POLITICAL MESS BEFORE THE PEOPLE

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 LISBON 04216 251814Z

HAVE REALLY SUFFERED WOULD EVENTUALLY DISCREDIT THEM, NOT GONCALVES.

6. THE TROUBLE WITH THIS THESIS IS THAT IN THE TWO MONTH INTERREGNUM THE COMMUNISTS AND THEIR FRIENDS IN THE MILITARY WILL HAVE HAD AN ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITY TO CONSOLIDATE THEIR GRIP ON VARIOUS ORGANS OF POWER. MY VIEW IS THAT SEPTEMBER MIGHT BE A FALLBACK BUT WE SHOULD CONSIDER THE PRESENT CRISIS AS

A DECISIVE POINT.

7. MY RECOMMENDATION IS THAT OUR EMBASSIES IN APPROPRIATE
NATO CAPITALS DISCUSS THE POSSIBILITY OF AN APPROACH TO COSTA
GOMES OVER THE WEEKEND OR EARLY NEXT WEEK. IF BY THE
BEGINNING OF THE WEEK IT SEEMS THAT PRESSURE WOULD ON BALANCE BE
WORTH THE RISK AND OUR ALLIES ARE UNWILLING TO DO IT, I BELIEVE
I SHOULD TELL MELO ANTUNES I WOULD LIKE AUDIENCE WITH THE
PRESIDENT UNLESS HE STILL THINKS THAT WOULD HURT HIS (MELO
ANTUNES'S) CAUSE.
CARLUCCI

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, GOVERNMENT REFORM, POLITICAL SITUATION, PROCOMMUNIST
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LISBON04216
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750257-0654
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750722/aaaaatoa.tel
Line Count: 126
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <11 JUN 2003 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <12 JUN 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRO-COMMUNIST POWER PLAY AND POSSIBLE APPROACH TO COSTA GOMES
TAGS: PINT, PO, (COSTA GOMES, FRANCISCO DA)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006